



NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION

Empowering Drivers Since 1982

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Testimony for the Senate Transportation Committee On SB46, March, 2, 2017

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the National Motorists Association (NMA) opposes the bill in its original language, but would be supportive with a particular amendment.

We believe that removing roof lights from police vehicles used in traffic duty is a bad idea. Roof lights on police vehicles help make them identifiable as authorized police vehicles, including as seen from just the rear view mirrors of a vehicle in a traffic stop situation.

Without roof lights an imposter could fit police-style lights in the grille of their vehicle which would be virtually undetectable when not flashing, and use the vehicle for illegal traffic stops for criminal purposes. Some potential victims include women driving alone at night who could be stopped for sexual assault, and almost anyone who could be stopped for robbery, car jacking or other crimes.

I attached a report from Rome, Georgia last month with just such an impersonator using only grille lights to attempt to stop a female driver after dark. Google searches will reveal other incidents.

I suggested some language in an email to the bill sponsors yesterday, but I think I have a clearer amendment to suggest, adding one sentence to Section 698 (5)(a) which currently reads:

(a) A police vehicle shall be equipped with flashing, rotating, or oscillating red or blue lights, for use in the performance of police duties.

[My suggested sentence in caps] POLICE VEHICLES WITHOUT ROOF LIGHTS USED IN TRAFFIC PATROL SHALL BE IDENTIFIED WITH CLEAR SIGNS OR LOGOS ON BOTH SIDES AND THE REAR IDENTIFYING THE POLICE AGENCY THAT OWNS THE VEHICLE, PLUS A SIGN ABOVE THE HOOD SIMILAR TO THOSE USED ON MICHIGAN STATE POLICE VEHICLES OR A SIGN ACROSS THE TOP OF THE WINDSHIELD CLEARLY IDENTIFYING THEM AS POLICE VEHICLES.

The NMA believes such an amendment would make the bill better and we would then be happy to support it.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

James C. Walker for the NMA



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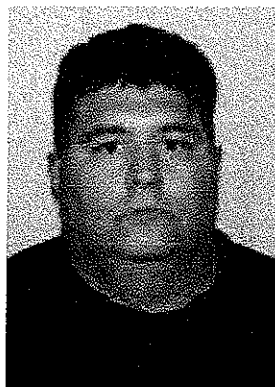
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Tony Arden Ruth



Posted: Thursday, February 16, 2017 8:00 am | Updated: 8:45 am, Thu Feb 16, 2017.



Posted on Feb 16, 2017
by Diane Wagner

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A man accused of impersonating a police officer found out the hard way that the woman driver he tried to pull over was an off-duty

police officer.

"He picked the wrong person," Floyd County Assistant Police Chief Mark Wallace said.

Tony Arden Ruth, 43, of 100A Reeceburg Road, was arrested shortly before 10 p.m. Tuesday after a report that he was using flashing lights and driving aggressively in an attempt to conduct a traffic stop on another motorist.

The report came from the driver, Floyd County police investigator Amy Nails, who was on her way home from an evening in Cartersville.

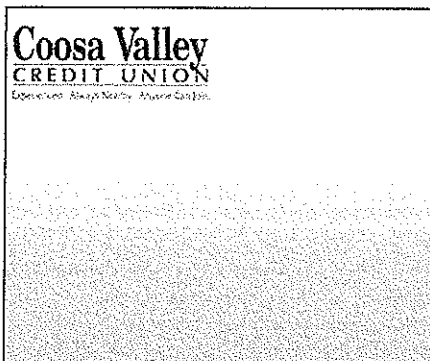
"I'd been to the movies with my kids and family," Nails said. "When I came through the (Ledbetter Interchange) to Turner McCall, I noticed him directly behind me."

Ruth started flashing auxiliary lights in his grill and shining what appeared to be a handheld flashlight at her car, Nails said.

As he followed her down Turner McCall Boulevard, Nails called 911 and told the dispatcher what was happening.

"Fortunately, there were city and county officers close by. I don't know if he saw them and got nervous, but he pulled into Kmart on Hicks Drive and was taken into custody."

Ruth is charged with felony impersonating an officer and





misdeemeanor aggressive driving and reckless driving. He also faces three counts of cruelty to children in the second degree because there were three young children in Nails' car.

The arrest report notes that Ruth's wife was with him in his car, begging him to stop. Nails said he told the investigating officer he thought she was speeding and he was going to make a citizen's arrest.

"The only reason I didn't stop was I had three kids in my car, one in a car seat," she said. "I'm confident if I would have stopped, he would have approached the vehicle. I don't know what he would have done then."

But Nails said "civilian" drivers in the same situation — women and men — should do what she actually did:

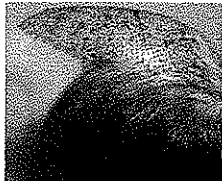
Call 911.

"Slow down, / laws, pick up your cell and tell 911 what's going on," she said.

Share
This is not f... pe have fielded complaints of people unconnected with law enforcement trying to initiate a traffic stop. Dispatchers are in contact with every officer on the job and can easily check to see if it's a bona fide stop.

Ruth was driving a dark Chevrolet minivan. Anyone who's been pulled over by a man in a car matching that description is asked to call the Rome Police Department at 706-238-5111.

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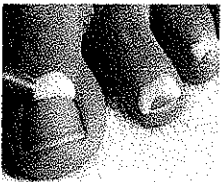
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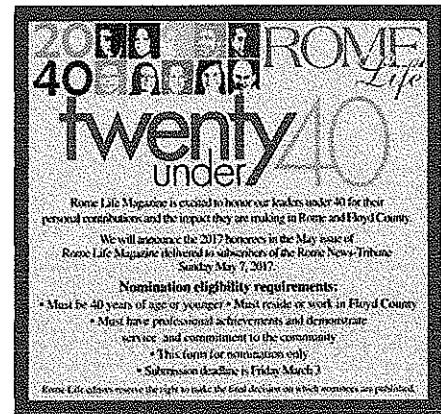


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